

This finale, which must remain intimately connected with the opera as a whole, is nevertheless a sort of little comedy or operette all by itself, and requires a new plot and an unusually high pitch of interest. The finale, chiefly, must glow with the genius of the conductor, the power of the voices, the grandest dramatic effects. Recitative is banned from the finale: everybody sings; and every form of singing must be available--the adagio, the allegro, the andante, the intimate, the harmonious and then--noise, noise, noise; for the final almost always closes in an uproar: which, in musical jargon, is called the chiusa, or rather the stretta, I know not whether because, in it, the whole power of the drama is drawn or "pinched" together, or because it generally gives not one pinch but a hundred to the poor brain of the poet who must supply the words. The finale must, through dogma of the theater, produce on the stage every singer of the cast, be there three hundred of them, and whether by ones, by twos, by threes or by sixes, tens or sixties; and they must have solos, duets, terzets, sextets, thirteenets, sixtyets; and if the plot of the drama does not permit, the poet must find a way to make it permit, in the face of reason, good sense, Aristotle, and all the powers of heaven or earth; and if the finale happens to go badly, so much the worse for him.

Lorenzo Da Ponte, *Memorie*